

HOW TO... Convert your LPs to MP3

Transfer your vinyl LPs to CD with the help of Ben Pitt and this month's cover disc

X-OOM MUSIC CLEAN 3.2



If you've discovered the convenience of storing music in MP3 format, the chances are that your vinyl collection is currently gathering dust. X-OOM Music Clean can help you convert your albums to CD or MP3 – and you'll find the software on your cover disc.

Record decks have an RIAA output, which you can't connect directly to your sound card's line input. Instead use the sockets marked Record Out or Tape Out on your hi-fi's pre-amp or, if this isn't available, use the headphone output.

1 Install and run X-OOM Music Clean and select Cleaning Wizard from the Welcome screen. The first page of this wizard presents recording quality options, but the default CD quality is fine so click Next. Select the line input

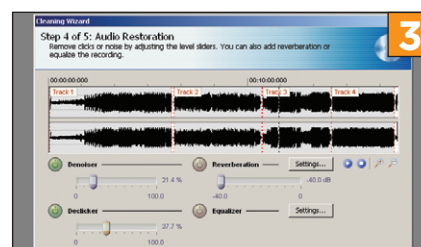
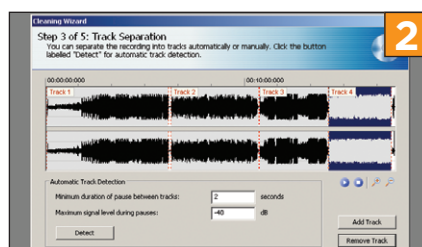
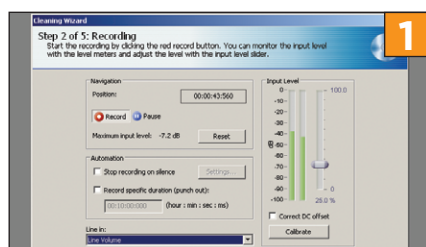
for your sound card in the drop-down list marked Line in. Play a record and adjust the volume slider so the volume reaches the yellow portion of the level meters but rarely goes into the red. If the volume slider doesn't work, adjust it using your sound card's mixer utility.

When you're ready, play the record from the start and click Record. Click Pause followed by Next when you've got all the tracks you want.

2 Music Clean will identify individual tracks in your recording by searching for gaps of a specified length where the volume falls below a certain threshold. If these automatic settings find too many or too few tracks, change the length and volume of gaps to look for and click Detect. Alternatively, you can zoom into the waveform

display and add or remove tracks manually. To add a track, drag the mouse across its entire length to highlight it and click Add Track. Click Next when you're done.

3 You can remove continuous noise and occasional clicks from recordings by activating the Denoiser and Declicker effects and turning up their amounts. Don't overdo it, as aggressive processing removes wanted sounds as well as unwanted ones. Avoid using the Reverberation and Equalizer options unless you want to experiment with creative effects. Click the Play button to audition the effects and Next to process the recordings. On the next screen, save the results as an audio CD or MP3, WMA, Wav or OGG Vorbis files and click Finish.



HOW TO... Paint on your PC

Martin Anderson explains how to create a masterpiece with Project Dogwaffle



PROJECT DOGWAFFLE 2.1



Painting software simulates natural media such as oils and watercolours, but mimicking real-world brushstrokes and blending is no small programming challenge. Project Dogwaffle 2.1 – the full version of which is on this month's cover DVD, together with 24 tutorial videos – is a versatile imaging program with a full complement of filters, tools and effects. Here we show you how to create a simple piece of artwork in just three steps.

1 Open Dogwaffle. Pick a new 1,280x768 canvas from the Buffer menu. Click OK. Set Anti-Aliasing to High in the Brush Settings panel. Click the Gradients button on the Fill/

Gradient panel, then select skys.grd. Right-click the Brush icon in the Tools palette and select Oils/Large Cover. Broadly cover the canvas, leaving some white for clouds. Tick enabled and shading in the Optipustics panel. Click Settings and select trees2.opt. Draw your mouse upwards on the canvas to create mid-sized trees, which will vary in structure and style depending on how quickly and persistently you draw them.

2 Add a clump of distant trees on the left, with the preset Broccoli_Trails2.opt from the Settings list in the Optipustics panel. Lay in the mid-foreground grass with the preset Serious Grass.opt from Settings. Broadly cover the

foreground, then add some more sun-mottled grass on the right by dragging the Gradient Index slider along two notches in the Optipustics panel before finishing the right-hand foreground grass.

3 Choose some larger immediate-foreground vegetation from Optipustics/Settings. Many Dogwaffle enthusiasts share their settings and brushes on the web, and we have used some lavender and daisies presets from Burt Abreu (<http://tinyurl.com/2btyqj>). To install downloaded settings, copy the unzipped .opt files to your Dogwaffle install directory. Restart the program and your new settings will appear alongside the defaults in Optipustics Control/Settings.

